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District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **MAN CONVICTED OF ENDANGERING THE LIVES OF 5 ALIENS IN ROLLOVER CRASH NEAR PICACHO PEAK**

TUCSON – Marco Antonio Mejia-Luna, 23, a Mexican National and Legal Permanent Resident of the United States, was found guilty of two counts of transporting illegal aliens for profit by causing serious bodily injury or placing in jeopardy the life of another, by a federal jury in Tucson. The case was tried before United States District Court Judge Raner C. Collins on February 21, 2007. The guilty verdict was announced on February 22, 2007. The defendant is being held pending sentencing. Sentencing is set before Judge Collins on May 21, 2007 at 9:00 a.m..

The evidence at trial showed that four individuals, two illegal aliens in the vehicle and two Border Patrol agents, identified the defendant as the driver of the rollover vehicle. The Border Patrol agents testified that they were parked on the median near Red Rock and noticed the defendant driving a white Isuzu SUV on Interstate 10 northbound towards Phoenix, Arizona. Due to the defendant's suspicious behavior, the Border Patrol agents decided to investigate further. Agents safely pulled out onto Interstate 10 and followed the defendant's vehicle to get a closer look. When the agents pulled in behind the Isuzu, the defendant weaved in and out of traffic in an attempt to elude the agents.

Agents caught up to the defendant just before the Pichacho Peak exit. The defendant turned right at the end of the off ramp and blew through a stop sign in an attempt to turn left at Frontage Road. The defendant, however, lost control of the vehicle and rolled it. The defendant exited the vehicle from the driver's side and ran from the scene. Five illegal aliens exited the vehicle and rested near a tree. One Border Patrol Agent stayed with the five illegal aliens and called for emergency medical assistance to ensure the illegal aliens were medically treated. The other Border Patrol Agent chased the defendant for 45-minutes and was able to track the defendant by following his footprints. The defendant was found at the top of a wash laying on his stomach and hiding under a bush. Two illegal aliens testified that the defendant drove the rollover vehicle. The illegal aliens testified that one of the illegal aliens suffered a gash on his head and was treated at the scene by emergency medical technicians. The illegal aliens also testified to neck, back, and heart pain a little over a month after the rollover.

A conviction for transporting illegal aliens for profit during which the defendant caused serious bodily injury or placed in jeopardy the life of another carries a maximum penalty of 20 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Collins will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

The investigation leading to the guilty verdict was conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The prosecution was handled by Munish Sharda, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-06-1736-TUC-RCC (JCG)  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2007-058(Mejia-Luna)

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